1: Orans E-5 (1957-1958) 1965
AW42 Santal AW42

613 776 782 to participate in a prescribed way in this ceremony; in particular they are often asked to become "possessed" (*rum*) and represent either the spirits of the ancestors and/or Marañ Buru, the chief deity of the Santal. It is these spirits, representing as they do the unity of the Santal and the local lineage respectively, that must give their approval of the food and other offerings presented to them by the lineage. Non-members thus serve as properly objective outsiders in making this judgment, even though it is done in a state of "possession" in which they are the vehicles of the deity and spirits. It is interesting that these outsiders are frequently mother's brothers or other relatives of a woman married into the lineage; in this way the affinal connections of the local lineage are also given recognition in this ceremony.

The expressions of the Santal regarding this rite indicate that feelings of strength and bravery within the solidary lineage are closely associated with the rites performed. As one Santal put it, "Field worship is of hero Gods; by worshipping them, courage and bravery are gained by the members of the sub-lineage." Another Santal added, "Nowadays there is no warfare, but these deities are true as anything"; a third then related a famous tale of two Santal heroes who were of his sub-clan.

764 [192] [782] [613] "Field worship" is inextricably intertwined with certain funerary rites (*bhaṇḍan*; Hindi: *Bhāṇḍa* = an earthen vessel) which are prerequisites for both "field worship" and marriage rites. Representatives of the local lineage must perform the *bhaṇḍan* after the death of any member. Among the northern [484] Santal these rites are generally performed at the Damodar [184] River; some of the southern Santal also journey to the Damodar

1: Orans E-5 (1957-1958) 1965
AW42 Santal AW42

184
764 but others perform the rites at less distant streams. The fact
[484] that the southern Santal often journey northward to the Damodar for funerary purposes suggests that many of them might have come from this region southward, bringing the tradition of the sacred Damodar with them. It is possible that this voyaging is either the result of recent contact with the northern Santal or consultation with the ethnographic literature about them; however, this seems unlikely since there is no particular reason why they should have chosen to borrow such an inconvenient practice from their northern co-tribals. Formerly the
[178] southern Santal deposited certain bones of the deceased at the river after performing various rites at some Hindu cremation grounds on the bank of the river. Today, a few coins are deposited in lieu of bones.*

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764
769 Before the voyage to the river, members of the local lineage, together with their wives and other affinal relatives and fellow villagers of the deceased, join in rites performed within the deceased's village. However, the local lineage is responsible for supplying to the spirit of the deceased the offerings which must be accepted by his spirit as manifested in a medium. The considerable cost involved in supplying these offerings is not totally lost, since the local lineage customarily sells these offerings after returning from the river. The arrangements for this procedure represent a compromise which reveals the antagonism between solidarity and the higgling and haggling of the market. It is required that the items offered be exchanged at far less than their cost, that there be no bargaining, and that members of the local lineage, and in principle even fellow clan

* For a relatively complete account of funerary rites, see Culshaw 1949: Chap. 12.

1: Orans E-5 (1957-1958) 1965
AW42 Santal AW42

613 764 769 members, may not purchase them. Thus there is a proper sacrifice, haggling is not allowed to sully the offering, and still all is not totally lost.

Several deaths may accumulate within a lineage before the collection of offerings and voyage to the river are accomplished, and within this period the local lineage may not enter into marriage alliances or carry on "field worship." It is a question of ridding the local lineage of pollution so that the members may re-enter the social life of the community. Voyages to the river are performed during several prescribed periods of the year, and members of several lineages living within a region may journey there together, especially if it is a long voyage to the Damodar.

761 The eminently social nature of death, for both the deceased and the living, and its interconnection with marriage, lineage solidarity, and social identity are recognized implicitly by the Santal. Thus their very great fear of living exclusively among non-Santal is often expressed by saying, "If we live among others, who will there be to bury us?"

613 574 Besides ritual ties, the local lineage, though by no means economically corporate, is a source of mutual aid. To deny food and lodging to members of one's local lineage, while not strictly speaking unthinkable, would be the greatest of social offenses, and if adequate food and lodging are available, something that no sane Santal would contemplate. Indeed, in the absence of shortage—and sometimes even then—to provide generous hospitality to all Santal, i.e., all "kinsmen" (*peṛa hor*) in the most extended sense, is a cause for joy. Generally, when "kinsmen" visit, the man of the house will meet them and cry out to his wife that "kinsmen" have come; the wife brings water, oil (which she rubs on their tired feet), and rice beer if there is

2: Skrefsrud M-5 (1870-1871) 1942 AW42 Santal AW42

He stated that he was a disciple of a guru named Buku. Together with other Santals he had emigrated eastwards. His old home being in Manbhum explains that some very few of his statements are different from what is the present custom in the Santal Parganas.

Koisan was a guru, a designation borrowed from the Hindus but adapted to suit Santal society. A Santal guru is a man who is supposed to know certain things, e. g., what should be recited at some ceremonial functions, and who is able to act as a reciter when called upon to do so. Any Santal can become a guru, by attaching himself to an older guru and gradually learning from him. In this way we cannot expect absolute uniformity throughout.

The use of such recitations may partly be due to imitation of Hindu customs, and there are definite statements in the traditional tales here translated to the effect that the ancestors on a certain occasion, after long deliberations, decided to abandon some customs of their own and to adopt Hindu usages instead. In this connexion it is of interest to note that the Santals often use songs in a foreign language, notably Bihari, during their festivals and at cremations. And it is a curious fact that many Santals do not understand these songs. It is evident that we have, to some extent, to do with borrowings, but it would be an exaggeration to maintain that the whole has been borrowed.

The traditional history of the world as contained in the first part of Koisan's narrative is recited twice in connexion with the life of every Santal, first at the caco chaliar, when a child is ceremoniously given full social right, and finally at the bhaŋdan, the funeral ceremony, when the deceased is handed over to the next world and to the care of the departed ancestors.

P. O. Bodding.

2: Skreferud M-5 (1870-1871) 1942 AW42 Santal AW42

584 morning they again send for the bridegroom's party. They give them beer, and the bride's mother gives the marriage-broker five seers of flattened and parched rice and ties it up in his cloth. All now go out into the courtyard and salute each other; they say good-bye to the bridegroom's party. And these come home, well and good.

f. Of the marriage itself.

The marriage-broker goes and comes. On both sides they get together what is needed for the marriage. When the money has been handed over, the marriage takes place, sometimes the same year and sometimes also after a lapse of one or two years.

585 When they feel like being able to have the marriage, the bridegroom's father says to the marriage-broker: Do bring us a knot-string[20] from the friends. He consequently goes to the bride's home and says to them: Please let us tie the knots. The bride's father then calls the village headman and his deputy and the Jog Mañjhi together and gives them beer. When they are drinking this the village headman asks him: What beer is this? The bride's father answers them: The marriage-broker has come; say for how many days shall we tie knots for him? They count the days and possible hindrances. When they have done this, they tie nine knots.

Thereupon they twist thread as signs for a twelve cubits long red and white striped cloth for the mother of the bride, and for an eight cubits long cloth for the bride's maternal grandmother, and a seven cubits long cloth for the bride's paternal grandmother. They give the knot-string and the twisted threads to the marriage-broker, and he takes them to the bridegroom's father.

When the bridegroom's father gets this, he calls the village headman and his deputy and says to them: You see this, they have sent us the knot-string; what are we to say? They say: It is well, let us also tie knots in reply to them. They drink the beer and also tie knots, five strings, one for the bride's father, one for the headman of the bridegroom's village, one for his deputy, one for the Jog Mañjhi, and one for the relatives of the bridegroom's father. The knot-string for the bride's father they at once send by the marriage-broker.

When three days remain, the bridegroom's father calls the village headman and his deputy and says to them: Listen, Sir, as you know, the day is getting near, let us set up the marriage-shed[21]. They answer him: All right. The bridegroom's father then says to them: Please get hold of five young men and five girls for me. The Jog Mañjhi then

[764]

[20] To ensure keeping correct time, or to know the day of certain coming events the Santals tie knots or rather loops on a string, one knot for every day remaining. It is done in connexion with marriage and bhaṇḍan (the last funeral ceremonies). It is always an uneven number, seven or nine, and occasionally eleven knots. The string is taken to the parties concerned, who keep it and, as the days pass, release one knot each day; when the last knot is opened, they know that the day has come. It is to them a practical way of keeping time.

[21] See Santal Dictionary s. v. maṇḍwa. The word is Hindi.

2: Skrefsrud M-5 (1870-1871) 1942 AW42 Santal AW42

76
539

Alas, alas, my pigeon-mate,
My pigeon-mate and I, our pair is broken.
Going in which direction
Might I catch sight of the form of my pigeon-mate?

When children die, their mother cries:

Alas, alas, my parakeet,
My parakeet, O mother, flew away.
Going in which direction
Might I catch sight of the form of my parakeet?

They mention again and again various griefs of their heart, not what they have heard from others: just what at the moment comes up in their heart, this they mention in their lamentation.

b. The cremation.

• 764 We cremate people on the day they die. We inform the village headman and his deputy, and these two give the Godet an order: Do call the people together, we shall go to carry firewood in such and such a house. And they assemble in the house of death, taking axes with them. The women of that house grind turmeric and roast cotton seed and paddy. The men catch a fowl, apply fire to a straw-rope and pull out some thatching-grass from the eaves; the roasted cotton-seed and paddy and the thatching-grass from the eaves and the fowl they place in a worn-out winnowing-fan. And what the people of the house send with the dead one, all this they place on the bedstead, viz., clothes, a brass-cup, rupees, pice, a battle-axe, bow and arrows, a stick, a flute and all his implements. When they have finished arranging all this, four men come in, and taking hold of the four bedstead-legs they carry the dead one out; when they have brought him out into the courtyard, they carry him on the bedstead on their shoulders to the junction of roads at the end of the village street; here they put him down for a short while. Here all the women of the house and of the village anoint him with oil and turmeric, and they put a sindur mark on his forehead, and the roasted cotton seeds and paddy they drop down in small heaps at the four bedstead-legs.

[756] Thereupon an ojha exorcises the dead one with the fowl mentioned, waving it three times round over him. Now the women return home, and the men carry the dead one on their shoulders to the place where he is to be cremated. If the man has a low rice-field with running water, they will cremate him there, and if he has not, then at a river. There they build the funeral pyre running North and South, after having cut wood. At the four corners they fix four posts to prevent it from falling down. These they call pyre-corner-posts. Thereupon they wash the hands and feet of the heir of the dead one; they

2: Skreferud M-5 (1870-1871) 1942 AW42 Santal AW42

rinse his eyes and pour a little water on his mouth. Thereupon the carriers lift him (the dead one) up and carry him three times round the pyre; when they have done this, they lift him up on the pyre; they put him down with his head towards the South. 764

The clothes of his body, necklaces, and loin-string they loose, rings, ear-rings, all of his they take off, the things sent with him they remove from him, and they cover his private parts with a branch, and they put down on him four pieces of wood, one on his breast, one on his stomach, one on his waist, and one on his feet; this they call covering wood.

The village men stand round the pyre. Any one whose wife is enceinte, stands some distance away. Now the ojha exorcizes them, waving the fowl mentioned three times round them; thereupon he nails the fowl to the pyre corner-post, and he cuts the bedstead and comes away from it. Thereupon the heir breaks off a sedge-culm and, uncoiling some threads of the fringes of the cloth of the dead one, he twists this round the sedge. Having kindled this he sets fire to the mouth of the dead one, while looking away to another side. This they call ag mukh[1]. [843]

Thereupon all the brothers and cousins first throw each one branch of firewood on the dead one; after them all the village men. Then they recite: Here then, we have all of us given thee one branch of firewood; do not keep us long, go like the wind. Thereupon they set fire to it round about. Thereupon they sit down together at a distance. Here one man shaves them. They are all shaved, and at the same time the dead one is cremated and finished. Now they quench the fire by pouring water on. When this is done, the heir rinses the bones with water and pours turmeric water and milk on them, and he puts them into an earthenware vessel. As we nowadays live very far away from the Damuda river, they put only the skull and collar bones, three pieces, into a small earthenware vessel. On this small vessel they place a potsherd, and in the middle of this there is a hole for the dead one to breathe; and into this hole they insert a crab-straw; on this the dead one wanders out and in. Round it they close it up by smearing on turmeric. The other bones, the ashes, and the charcoal they push out into the water of the river and immerse it there. When they pick up the bones, they sing[2]: [593] [605] [539]

Above the funeral pyre
The vulture is sweeping round;
My father's bones
Pick out for me.

Here, take it, vulture,
The gold in the ear.
My father's bones
Pick out for me.

[1] Ag means fire, mukh means mouth, both Hindi words. [2] In a corrupt form of Bihari.

2: Skrefsrud M-S (1870-1871) 1942 AW42 Santal AW42

764 Thereupon they put a winnowing-fan over the middle of the place where he was burnt; treading on this the men who carried him dig round it, and the one who was the last one to dig hacks the winnowing-fan and leaves it. Then one man mixes cowdung water in a brass-cup and sprinkles it on the places there up to where they had put him. Thereupon they scatter the remaining roasted cotton-seed and paddy over the place where he was cremated. And they say to it: Have a care then, so long a while the earth was closed up, now we are purifying thee. Thereupon some three men bury the small earthenware vessel containing the flower-bones in a copse at the end of the village street. In this place they cover with earth the earthenware vessel, over which they have put bark pressed down with a stone. Thereupon they all go to bathe. When they have bathed, they come to the end of the village street and stand there. They have some Sal-resin that they have taken off (some tree) when they came. One man asks for fire and brings it out from the village. Into this fire they throw the resin, and all of them are fumigated by this resin. Thereupon they go to their respective houses. All that was sent with the dead person they sell and buy a castrated goat (or pig), and the village people eat this the same day. But the people of the house where the death occurred, do not eat of it.

When it becomes evening, elderly men go to the house of death to console the inhabitants of this house. They say to them: Do not be constantly grieving; he is gone, he is happy; we shall also one day in the future have to go. If we should be continually crying, our body would suffer, our work would also be neglected; the landlords are there, the usurers and money-lenders are there, the relatives are there, our own stomach and soul are there; so long as we are alive, we shall surely not give up eating and drinking; therefore work, do what is to be done. Then from to-day keep your soul down with a stone-rock. People tell, they say: If you cry all day long, they will rap him who is gone on the head, like a buffalo-calf. In the other world they will say to him: Please you, dance, they are singing for you. Therefore do not wail and lament all over the country, or they will give him much hardship.

c. The ceremony of purification after death.

765 On the fifth day they have the purification ceremony[1]. They assemble in the house of the dead person and are shaved. The people of the house pound flattened rice, and they make three cakes, boiling them in oil. Now the people of the village go to bathe. They take a little soapy earth for washing the hair, oil-cake, oil, three tooth-brush twigs, and three or four leaves with them to the place where they are to bathe. The women go to a seperate place. The men divide the earth and the oil-cake that they have brought to the bathing place on three leaves, and the tooth-brush twigs they also put down along

[1] The Santal words tel asnan literally mean "oil bathing" and are taken from Hindi.

B Mukherjea O. Y-4, 5 (ca. 1933-1938) 1952
AW42 Santal AW42

Here they cast aside many of the customs of their forefathers, but no explanation is forthcoming at this date as to why they did so. Henceforth, their customs resembled those of the Hindus more and more. We learn that in ancient times, the Santal forefathers did not burn their dead, nor did they carry the bones of the dead men to the Damodar river for being consigned in its holy water. Previously, they buried the dead men. But all these were changed here. In marriage, the Hindu custom of applying vermilion to the forehead of the bride was henceforth adopted.

Next, the early Santals came to Icàk' buṭà (under the shade of a tree named Icàk'). As the womenfolk crossed the bog and gathered under a *mòhua* tree they were struck with wonder to find that the lotus-leaves they had trodden under their feet and the marks of *arta* (equivalent to Hindu *alta*, a red pigment applied by the Hindu women to dye the sides of their feet) were absolutely undisturbed and intact. From this strange phenomenon they were convinced that they had done the right thing in changing the customs and resolved that they should henceforth stick to the changes.

The early Santals lived at Icàk' buṭà for a long time. But, as before, they migrated. The reasons are again uncertain, some ascribing it to the fear of the Turuks. As they were passing on, they found

3t Mukherjea O. Y-4, 5 (ca. 1933-1939) 1902
AW42 Santal AW42
MAYURBHANJ

562 not get drunk." Only if we had not seen women
273 babbling in drunken brawl with the introduction of the outstill system in the Santal Parganas, and had not educated Santals at Baripada told us an opposite tale, . . we could thoroughly agree with her sex-patriotism, if such a phrase is permissible.

562 In house-construction, however, the division of
342 labour has a nicety of its own, for, we learn, the
784 women cannot sit upon a thatch except on pain of
[783] social excommunication. Such a pollution can only
[462] be expatiated by *Pujas* to the god "Dhòròm." So by its very necessity, house-building is man's
562 preserve. A quite similar taboo attaches to them
784 during funerals when according to custom, women
764 cannot accompany the procession beyond the limits of the village where the death occurred.

464 Santal men engaged in the police service were
625 highly spoken of by the Superintendent of Police,
159 Mayurbhanj, as efficient, obedient and hard-working. Asked if their drink-habit was not a hindrance to them, he was emphatic that it did not matter at all. Mr. Mahanty, a Deputy Magistrate, spoke in a similar strain about his Santal employees.

562 And we have seen women at work, at work
461 during the heat-wave of the Santal Parganas when all nature flies indoors, women singing at their work, punctual to a fault and hard-working to a painful extent. But, if her hour of work is seven a.m.

3t Mukherjea O. Y-4,5 (ca. 1933-1939) 1902
AW42 Santal AW42

Thus theoretically speaking at least, each of its group is exogamous as far as its own group is concerned, but endogamous in relation to the other groups, who are *Bòndhus*, subject to a variety of other restrictions, as we shall soon see in detail. Broadly speaking, this arrangement points to the existence of a dual division among the Santals in the past for matrimonial purposes.

It may be noted here that the various Santal clans have their own *gadi* (original seats). If it so chances that a Santal finds his own *gadi*, the same with that of others, his attraction is stronger towards his clan-group than to his other relatives, however near they may be. Thus there is a solid tie among the *Jàtiâ Peras* (friends of the same blood) belonging to the same clan, all of whose members undergo ceremonial pollution on the death of one of the clan. Thus clan-ties amongst Santals transcend even degrees of relationship.

The son inherits the clan-name of his father and lives with his father as of right. The father is the natural guardian of the children, and the way in which descent is reckoned is patrilineal. The Santal wife has no legal status in the eye of tribal jurisprudence; she is simply bought and belongs to the husband's family as a chattel. And the type of family that centres round the father as the head, may be characterised as patripotestal.

3t Mukherjea O. Y-4, 5 (ca. 1933-1939) 1962
AW42 Santal AW42

Rights and Duties of Certain Relations

121 602 593 We consider it necessary to note the peculiar rights and duties of certain relatives and their mutual behaviour, as noticed in the Santal society, to enable us to understand better their kinship organisation.

1. Father

593 [846] During *Chàṭiàr* (a ceremony observed as a cleansing from ceremonial defilement after childbirth) it is the father who will hold and carry the oil with which his kinsmen will rub themselves before the customary ablution. None but the father of the child can discharge this function. The reverence paid by the Santal to his father can be witnessed from his customary ancestor-worship. The average son is very obedient to his father and quarrels are rare.

2. Eldest son

[764] The eldest son is required by custom to apply the first fire to the dead body of his father during cremation.

602 [846] [585] [764] 3. Agnates

Bhàyàds (blood-relatives to the known degrees on the father's side) must assemble at the *Chàṭiàr*, marriage and funeral ceremonies of their kin. They present *bàṇḍia* and cloths and thus lighten the burden of the feasts, to which they are treated in return according to custom.

3t Mukherjea O. Y-4, 5 (ca. 1933-1939) 1962
AW42 Santal AW42

In some areas, as in the sadar sub-division of Mayurbhanj, there is an interesting variation in the custom requiring both the complainant and accused to pay jointly for the feast of the judges, in the proportion of ten annas for the accused and six annas for the complainant in the rupee. Generally the "pañc" themselves eat the dinner; the public take no part in it. The contending parties then depart after a cordial mutual *johar* (salutation). In frivolous cases, the complainant has got to pay a fine himself. So we see that the Headman is not the sole repository of law in the eye of tribal jurisprudence to settle disputes; he must consult the "*Mònṛèn* hòṛ" to arrive at a decision.

The Headman with the assembly decides all matters of a socio-religious, legal and quasi-legal nature of the village. They are the fountain-heads of justice and custodians of Santal customs and manners, the first court of law both civil and criminal, for the Santal is generally averse to litigation in legally constituted courts, and prefers the arbitration of his village-elders.

To go into details, the Headman with his assembly will raise subscriptions for the public festivals like the December Harvest-Home, for religious feasts, and for offering libations to the deities of serious epidemics affecting the tribe. In all cases of marriage and funerals, the Headman and his advisory body must attend. Such ceremonies without them are unthinkable to the Santal.

Jt Mukherjea O. Y-4, 5 (ca. 1933-1939) 1962
AW42 Santal AW42

arises ; and those days are the more when it was a regular feature of Santal life with the mass dancing and drinking associated with its conclusion. So it is that the Santals of Mayurbhanj have got a second string to their bow, in the form of a parliament during *Sakrat baske*, (*Mòkòrbasi*, on the second of Magh) in case the hunting assembly may not be convened for want of sufficient attraction.

692 534 [224] 184 [178]

Supreme council at Mòkòrbasi

This parliament of the *Desh-Pròdhans* is held at some halting place (*gadi* or *mukam*) towards the river Damodar to which the Santals journey to throw the bones of their dead relations in the holy river. Here it is that the people aggrieved by the decision of the *Desh-Pròdhans* appeal to the assembly of elders to reopen their cases and try them according to law. Frequently, these appeals are admitted and tried by the assembly of all the *Desh-Pròdhans* of the tribe in consultation with the elders. But here also only important questions relating to the payment of bride-price or restriction of conjugal rights form the subject-matter of the decisions of the supreme court.

[764]

Social taboos: Punishment for their breaches

While dealing with the village assembly and its powers and functions, we have observed that as

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3i Mukherjea O. Y-4, 5 (ca. 1933-1939) 1962
AW42 Santal AW42

881 of the male-child to all the privileges of the 783 community life of the tribe. It is relevant to add [582] that marriage is not permitted to any one who has [764] not gone through the ceremony and should one die (without going through the ritual) his dead-body cannot be cremated nor are his bones thrown into the river, the most important step in a Santal funeral. It is, however, frequently seen that the father of several children performs the *Caco-chatiar* ceremony of all of them together.

As an initial step, *Jang hàṇḍia*, is prepared in the early morning. The villagers procure oil and [622] turmeric. The Headman and *Paranik* drink rice- [624] beer (*hàṇḍia*) and send for the villagers. The women [793] then rub oil and turmeric on the bodies of the *Naeke* (village-priest) and their assistants and this is done to all in a customary order of precedence from the village-officials down to the villagers. Rice-beer is served. The Santals dance and sing.

[538] Then comes the turn of an old man of the village, a *Guru*, the repository of Santal lores to recite the tribal story of the creation of the world and the wanderings of the Santal (already narrated in the 1st. Chapter, Santal Genesis and Migration) ancestors till they came to their present habitat.

It is then emphasised that all the impurities of the male-child have been purged away and by participating in the drinking bout of *hàṇḍia*, they

31 Mukherjea O. Y-4, 5 (ca. 1933-1939) 1962
AW42 Santal AW42

585 182 783 want to purify the couple from the evil effects of chance pre-marital sex-connections (a rare phenomenon with educated Santals), thereby neutralising the dangers to the family and the tribe.

585 179 182 Many of these ceremonials are closely analogous to Hindu practices; and have probably been borrowed and are thus due to culture contact, although it is not improbable that the Hindus themselves might have at an early period assimilated some similar Pre-Dravidian practices. Whatever that may be, one must notice that Santal marriages are closely associated with religion as is indicated by offering of vermilion to *Marañ Buru* and a goat to the dead ancestors. Thus we find that marriage no longer remains a civil contract of getting a partner in life on payment of a price, but takes the form of a sacrament as well.

585 182 771

FUNERAL CEREMONIES

• 764 The Santals have their own funeral customs. When a death takes place in the tribe, the village Headman and the elders flock together at the house in mourning, when they rub the dead body with oil and turmeric. Now, the corpse is taken out of the house in a *khatia* (a stringed bed-stead), placed in the yard and cleansed with cow-dung and water. A handful of paddy is spread over the spot and some thrust into the right palm of the deceased and thrown down some time later. The bier is next

3t Mukherjea O. Y-4,5 (ca. 1933-1939) 1962
AW42 Santal AW42

conveyed by four men, followed by a *Dàbi Daka* (a man who will place the dead body on the funeral pyre), carrying a winnowing fan containing fire in a bundle of straw, some seeds of cotton, straw picked from the thatch of the deceased, some fried paddy (*khòi*), powdered sun-dried rice mixed with turmeric, cow-dung and a small chicken in one hand ; while with the other, he holds a pot with lid, which will serve as the receptacle of the bones of the dead. In the rear, follow the villagers carrying *tañgis* (axes), *kudis* (an implement for digging earth) and thus they reach the crossroad at the outskirts of the village. Now, amidst lamentations the women-folk bathe the hands and feet of the deceased. The *Dàbi Daka* circles round the funeral assembly thrice and places some cotton-seeds beneath the four legs of the *khatia* (stringed bed-stead), when the bier is again lifted and the procession slowly moves towards the cremation ground. Here, the roads part for the women of the tribe, for, they have no right to proceed further. Hence they (women) wend their way to the bathing-ghat (*jòl-ghat*), have a purificatory ablution and thereafter go to the *kulbi* (village-lane) and crunch *dhup* (an incense). It is, however, remarkable that the members of the family in mourning need not do so; it is obligatory for the rest only.

Those at the cremation ground now procure fuel and make the pyre. The dead body is taken round

3t Mukherjea O, Y-4,5 (ca. 1933-1939) 1902
AW42 Santal AW42

764 thrice and placed on it. A fowl is sacrificed by
[782] means of a twig of a *mòhua* tree passed through its
[824] eyes, and hung on one of the posts round the pyre.[1] Three *mòhua*-twigs are then placed by any one of the village, one on the breast, one on the navel and the third on the waist of the dead body. His teeth are brushed with a tooth-stick of *sal*-wood, and some lime and tobacco applied to the mouth. And after all these preliminaries, the son of the deceased sets fire to the body, by lighting the straw of the thatch taken from the house of the deceased. The members of the tribe present throw some fuel each on the pile on fire as their ceremonial duty on behalf of the clan. In case, the deceased has no son, the right of applying fire descends in this order, (1) father (2) brother (3) agnates (4) men of the clan. The
[562] wife can never apply fire, as she never accompanies the funeral.

764 Now, as the body is half-burnt, two men are
782 deputed to the house of the deceased to gather some
824 *sal* tooth-sticks, some leaves of *kaima* tree, some roots of *bena* plant (a common grass found near tanks, *Andropogon muricatus*) and some fish, where they cook three handfuls of rice and a meat-curry with

1. Dr. Campbell calls it *Bulau* (a method of exorcism), page 87. *Santali to English Dictionary.*

3t Mukherjea O, Y-4,5 (ca. 1933-1939) 1962
AW42 Santal AW42

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[782]
[824]

fish added, to be offered to the gods at the cross-road.

On the conclusion of the cremation, water is poured on the pyre, first by the man who sets fire to the body, next by the pall-bearers and lastly by all the members of the tribe present. A bone from the forehead of the deceased is now gathered and kept inside the earthen pot, specially carried for the purpose, and buried under the earth near a *sal*-tree. This practice is uniform throughout Mayurbhanj and Santal Parganas. [784] The funeral party now returns home after bathing themselves and crunching *dhup* (incense).

Now it is time for the meal already cooked at home to be carried to the cross-road, where, near a cottage specially built for the purpose, it is offered to *Maran Buru* (the chief presiding deity) and the spirit of the deceased. [782] After this propitiation, the improvised hut is burnt down, and the party returns home. Custom requires that the head of the household and his wife should partake of the remnant of the offerings along with the villagers, and thereafter, some men will fall in a trance (*jhupar*) and impersonate *Maran Buru* and the deceased, who are closely questioned as regards the death. Then an uncanny conversation proceeds for a time about the world of spirits.

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A sample of the questions and answers may

3t Mukherjea O. Y-4, 5 (ca. 1933-1939) 1962
AW42 Santal AW42

764 787 illustrate the point well. Thus the man who sets fire to the deceased, asks *Marañ Buru* in trance. The village elders, "*Mònrèn hòr*," also join in the question. "Are you well ?" *Marañ Buru* answers, "I am all right." Then they again ask the dead man, "You were not much aged. Why did you die so early ? Did any *dan* (witch) eat you up ? Did you die through natural causes ?" The dead man answers (through *Marañ Buru*), "This was the span of my life, so I died." Next they ask again, "Have you hoarded wealth anywhere under the earth ?" The dead man answers (through *Marañ Buru*), "Yes" (or no). If the answer be in the affirmative, directions are given by the man in trance as to where the money lies buried. The men assembled, thereupon, will dig up the earth to find the hoarded wealth. Lastly, it may be that the dead man (through *Marañ Buru*) may ask those present to bring his children. They are then brought and kissed by him. He may also request those present to look after the children well.

765 783 *Telnahan or chotokaman* (*Preliminary purification*)

The Santal observes ceremonial pollution for a period till he is in a position to procure the requisites of purification. This affects the particular clan (614) to which the deceased belonged. Thus we gathered at Mayurbhanj that when a Nij Hansdak' dies, all

3: Mukherjea O, Y-4,5 (ca. 1933-1939) 1962
AW42 Santal AW42

764 •

Santal Funeral

Sketch : Satya Chakraborty

[Page 222]

[End Plate 9]

4: Biswas D, E-3, 4 (1931-1945) 1956
AW42 Santal AW42
SANTAL PARGANAS

346
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departed ; although this Manjhisthan is build before the house of the headman of a village yet it seems that the spirits of all deceased villagers are commonly considered to congregate there.

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After death, the body is carried on a bedstead by the relatives and villagers who cover the body with a new shroud. When they reach a cross road some [782] parched rice and cotton seeds are scattered about as a charm against the malignant spirits that might throw obstacles in the way. On that cross road they wait for an hour and the women and relations lament over the deceased. They carry the dead body to the bank of a streamlet nearby. The clothes, brass utensils and weapons of the departed are brought with the dead body. These things are sold at half price near the [432] pyre. The pyre is prepared with the wood which is [768] brought from the jungle nearby. Before placing the dead body on the pyre, the heir of the deceased with his face averted and walking backwards inserts a piece of grass between the lips of the dead man and places a silver coin in his hand. The dead body with the bedstead is placed on the funeral pyre and a small chip is taken off the collar-bone and deposited in a new pot and the heir then applies fire to the dead body by placing a piece of burning wood on the face of the corpse. Before setting fire to the body it is covered with a branch and four pieces of wood are put on it. A fowl is taken round the pyre thrice and is finally nailed to the south-west corner pole. After the heir has placed a piece of burning wood on the dead man's face, all the relatives and others present throw a log on the pyre and proceed to kindle it. The people sit at a

4; Biswas D, E-3, 4 (1931-1945) 1956
AW42 Santal AW42
SANTAL PARGANAS

764 distance and watch the body being consumed. The pot in which the bit of the collar-bone is kept, is then buried outside the village. Then they shave and bathe and before they enter the village smear themselves with sal resin The men who carried the dead man and also those who accompanied the dead to the cremation ground drink handi bought with the money realised from the dead man's articles. Coming back after cremating the body they hang a pot of leaves in the room where the man had breathed his last. In a cup they put some boiled rice and above the rice they place another pot containing fried fish. If the next morning some boiled rice can be [795] seen on the fish then they think the spirit of the departed came and partook of a portion of the rice. But if no rice can be seen then they think that the spirit did not come. In this case they believe that something of the departed is left with them, that is why the spirit did not come.

765 After five days there is a ceremony called Tel nahan. All the villagers assemble at the dead man's house and shave. Then they go and bathe, the men in one place, the women in another. The men take with them a little earth (used as soap), oilcake, oil, three sal twigs (used as tooth-brushes) and a couple of leaves. The villagers put these at the edge of the water on three separate leaves, and offer all with the left hand first to the dead, then to Pilchu Haram and Pilchu Burhi (first man and woman). The last two are invoked to take the dead man under their care. The Santals keep a little bone to throw in the water of the Damodar river. There is no fixed time for taking the bones to that river. It is the custom of the Santals to wait

41 Biswas D, E-3, 4 (1931-1945) 1956
AW42 Santal AW42
SANTAL PARGANAS

797 sprang from this pair. Also they correlate *Maran Buru* with 'Satan'. They believe that *Maran Buru* spoiled the first human pair and revealed to them the secret of sexual intercourse, just like the Christian who believe that Satan is responsible for the downfall of the first pair, Adam and Eve. The converted Santals observe the Christmas Day and Good Friday. Harvest Festivals are celebrated by decorating Churches and offering prayers.

Effect on the Social Culture of the Santals due to alien influence. The social system of the Santal is communistic in nature. In any festival, or ceremony the whole village takes part. This cohesion is now losing its strength. For this, missionary activities are to a certain extent responsible. The Christian converts are being cut off from social intercourse. Sometime a christian family is put to great inconvenience. This is particularly the case when a death occurs for the non-christians will have nothing whatever to do with the disposal of the dead body. The non-christian method of disposing the dead body is by cremation whereas the converted Santals practise burial and subsequent mourning and funeral ceremonies according to the Christian way. There is no bar to marrying more than one wife in Santal tribal custom. But this practice is strictly prohibited among Christian Santals as Christian religion strictly prohibits *bigamy*. Cross cousin marriage, and marriage with non-Santals is not tolerated by the tribal Santals but among Christian Santals, these things are not prohibited.

The marriage ceremony is held either in the Church or in the courtyards of the house of the bride's parents

St Culshaw M-5 (1932-1943) 1949 AW42 Santal AW42

and legends of Hinduism. The linguistic evidence shows how their material culture has been vitally affected and has some bearing on the more elusive realm of thought and belief. The grammatical structure of Santali has little in common with that of the Indo-Aryan tongues. It is an agglutinative and not an inflectional language. There have, however, been large and extensive borrowings of words. An instructive example can be taken from their method of husking rice. The term *ḍhinki*, used for a foot-pedal rice husker, has been borrowed from Bengali, and a *ḍhinki* is found in almost every home. The rice that is husked at the time of making sacrifices must be prepared in the home of the village priest, and in its preparation the use of the older and more primitive *ukhuṛ* is obligatory. This is a wooden mortar in which the rice is husked by hand with a wooden pestle, or *tok*. Both these words are Austro-Asiatic in origin. It is likely that when the household adopted the new method of husking rice the tribe did not change over from the old method of husking the sacred rice for fear of a loss in efficacy. One reason given is that as the *ḍhinki* is operated by the foot, rice husked in the *ḍhinki* is unclean and so unfit for offering to the spirits. It may be that the association of a mortar and pestle with sexual symbolism enhanced its magical value. The symbolism in this case is familiar to the Santal mind, for one way of expressing differences of sex is to refer to boys as "pestles" and to girls as "mortars". The *ukhuṛ* has to be used by the medicine man in preparing remedies; it is also used at marriages, when the feet of the bridegroom's party are washed over an *ukhuṛ*, and an *ukhuṛ* filled with water is required during the death ceremonies. In Bengal the rice which forms the daily food of the people is boiled before husking, and the Santals follow the same method in preparing it; but the rice used in sacrifices, *adwa caole*, is never so treated, being dried in the sun.

Among their domestic animals, the fowl, the dog and the goat have non-Bengali names, while the names for pigeons, sheep, pigs and, most important of all, their cattle are borrowed. Fowls, goats and pigs are all used in their sacrifices. In the realm of wild life the Santal has found little need to borrow a vocabulary from his neighbours. Wild animals, birds, trees and shrubs, many fish and insects, also snakes, have Santali names. The same is true of most of the weapons used in hunting. Although the term for paddy is Santal, the names of all the implements now used in rice cultivation and the terms for the

St Culshaw M-5 (1902-1943) 1949 AW42 Santal AW42

some thirty miles from Sarenga. This fair, which is one of the most famous in Western Bengal, takes place at the time of the Dol Jatra near a temple dedicated to Krishna. The last day of the *mela* is chiefly renowned for the fact that on that day there is a great concourse of Santals for dancing.

One festival which is shared with tribes living right across Central India[1] is the *Karam*. The fact that it is not peculiar to them is known to the Santals, and one informant once told me that they must have borrowed it from the Mahato. He had seen that the Mahato celebrated it and knew of the special relationship between the Mahato and his own people. Many of the songs contain references to Ram and Lokhon, heroes of the *Ramayana*. The festival is rather difficult to characterize, for its celebration takes different forms and arises from different causes. It is connected in all cases with the desire for prosperity, but it may be either a public or a private celebration. The *karam* is a tree[2] that is associated with the god Krishna in the *Vishnu Purana*. When a shoot of this tree is found growing in the land round a house or springing from the roof thatch, the head of that house is responsible for instituting an annual celebration of the festival. The fact that while it is celebrated annually in a great many villages it is not found invariably is perhaps accounted for by its accidental origin. The festival is also associated with certain other definite events. In some cases the leading celebrant is the local *ojha*, who holds a *Karam* festival at the beginning of the month of *Dâsâê* and before he sends out his disciples on their annual begging expedition. Sometimes it is celebrated in connection with the appointment of the new headman of a village, and sometimes in connection with the death ceremonies of a man of substance. Sometimes it is associated with the *Mak' Môṛê*, an occasional sacrifice to the "Five". These spirits are peculiarly liable to become offended, and offerings are made to them to avert their wrath, which takes the form of inflicting a poor harvest or an epidemic. Whatever the occasion may be, the celebration of the *Karam* is regarded as an insurance either on behalf of a particular family or on behalf of the whole village. It may be either a way of enhancing good fortune or of warding off evil. Where in the area it has become an annual festival it is held at the full moon in the month of *Sun* (July-August). At sunset the un-

[1] References to Central India are to be found in *Folk-Songs of the Maikal Hills*, by V. Elwin, Oxford University Press, pp. 3-11.

[2] *Adinia cordifolia*, Hook., f. and B.

5a Culshaw M-5 (1932-1943) 1949 AW42 Santal AW42

cation. In many cases Bengali names that bear some resemblance to the form of the private name come into use. Thus Polo has become Padma Lochan and Kala has become Kalachand. Ernest Soren was known throughout the countryside by the name that he received at his baptism. At the time of his *chatiar* he was given the name of Singrai, this being the name of his paternal grandfather's elder brother. From the same time he was addressed as Jhongol, thus receiving not only the private name but the outer name of the same relative, who was not then alive. Before he could walk he was usually addressed as Thenta, a name that signifies a restless bundle of mischief. Later when he was growing up he was known by his contemporaries as Dangra Sorkar, or Sorkar for short. The name Sorkar is often applied to those who are going to school, but he was known as the "bullock" Sorkar because he did not conceal his fondness for beef, whereas educated Santals are generally supposed to conform to Hindu custom and shun it. Names of relatives are bestowed without regard to whether the relatives concerned are living or dead.

The village community takes no formal notice of the growing child after the performance of the *janam chatiar* until he is ready for the ceremony of initiation, or *caco chatiar*. *Caco* is a word that means a toddler, one who is learning to walk. The ceremony, however, is not performed until the child is growing up. It is somewhat misleading to describe the ceremony as one of initiation, for in comparison with the elaborate ritual with which initiation is accomplished in many parts of the world it is a pale and colourless proceeding. In the Bankura area the performance of the rite is of an extremely casual nature. It is nevertheless the equivalent for Santals of initiation ceremonies in other societies, and it retains its importance not because of the intrinsic character of the ritual but because of certain consequences that follow from its non-observance. Unless the *caco chatiar* has been performed, no Santal boy or girl may be married, nor cremated after death. It may be that the custom has been drastically modified because of the expense involved, as the whole village should be feasted. It is now customary for families to wait until the ceremony can be performed for several children at the same time, and it is therefore delayed until the impending marriage of the eldest child makes it inevitable. In the village of Barikul, Babulal recorded a case in which the father and the mother had been living together for some years without having themselves gone through any marriage ceremonial. For both of them it had

CHAPTER 12

DEATH

761 It is far easier to describe the actions of the Santals in the face
152 of death than to reduce their beliefs concerning death and the destiny of man's soul to any system. Under the stress of bereavement the behaviour of the men is stoical, in somewhat marked contrast to the behaviour of the majority of the peoples among whom they live. The women, however, give full vent to the expression of their grief and voice their lamentations in
• 764 words that are poetical in form and content. As soon as a death has occurred, preparations are made for the burning. Cremation is the almost universal rule, although there are certain signi-
766 ficant exceptions. Children who die before puberty are buried with little ceremony in shallow graves on the edge of the forest, and though thorns are placed over the grave to protect the body from wild animals, such graves are often disturbed. Men and women who have died from certain diseases are buried in the same manner, a fact that accounts for the often unsavoury condition of the patch of jungle that adjoins the compound of the Mission Hospital at Sarenga. This is particularly true of those
[164] who die from tuberculosis, which is known to the Santals as *khok' ajar*, or "cough fever", and leprosy, which is called the "great disease". When deaths occur in the village from these causes or from some other infectious disease such as smallpox, the living avoid contact with the dead bodies as far as possible. The body of the dead person is fastened to a rude stretcher made with *sarjom* saplings, and the stretcher is then yoked to a pair of bulls which drag it out of the village. There the body is left after a token burial with a few handfuls of earth, and the task of corpse
764 disposal is left to the vultures and jackals. In some villages
[184] burial is the custom because of the difficulty of obtaining sufficient firewood.

[624] In the usual course of events the *godet'* goes through the village calling on every house to contribute its share of the wood for the burning. From each house one of the men takes a stick for the burning to the bereaved home, while one of the women takes along a small amount of oil and turmeric for anointing the body, and, if the dead person be a married woman, some vermilion in addition. When all have gathered, the corpse is washed and rubbed all over with the oil and turmeric; in the case of a married woman fresh vermilion is put on her forehead and in

5: Culshaw M-5 (1932-1943) 1949 AW42 Santal AW42

the parting of her hair. Next, all the articles required for the cremation are collected. These include a spade, an axe, parched rice, an old winnowing fan, a water pot, a handful of straw from the roof of the house, cotton seeds, a small earthen pot containing turmeric paste, flour made from sun-dried rice, and a hen. The body is carried out from the courtyard feet first on a string bed that is borne by four men. When the end of the village street is reached the bed is set down for a minute and those who wish to do so anoint the body once more for the last time. The women folk do not accompany the body beyond the confines of the house s. When the last anointing is over, the bed is picked up and carried to the regular cremation ground, which is by the side of a stream or a lake. At Sarenga, where both Santals and non-Santals live, they share the same cremation ground. The pyre is known as the *sara*; it is constructed from north to south and the body is placed upon it with the head pointing to the south, this being the general Hindu custom as well. The foundation is made with large logs on which kindling wood and smaller pieces of firewood are laid, and the four corners are marked by driving stakes into the ground. Before the pyre is set alight all clothing is removed from the body, including the piece of string that has been fastened round the waist since a string was first placed there at the time of the *janam chatiar*. Leaves and small pieces of wood are placed over the body to "cover the shame". When the body is in position the hen is sacrificed. It is transfixed to one of the upright corner stakes with thorns. "The reason", said a Santal, "is this. One life has gone, and to save that life in the next world we send another life. By giving this other life we please *Jom Raj* (the king of the underworld according to Hindu mythology)."

When a married woman has died her husband has to apply fire to the corpse. In the case of a man the duty is performed by his eldest son, and failing a son it falls to the lot of the senior kinsman on the male side who is present. He takes in his hand a thin stick to the end of which a rag has been tied. This end he dips in the oil vessel and it is then set alight. Then, suported by two of his neighbours, he walks round the funeral pyre three times, after which he puts the burning cloth to the mouth of the corpse, looking in the opposite direction as he does so. Even in cases where the corpse is buried, fire must be applied to the mouth. When this has been done, the two men who have been supporting the chief mourner set fire to the two southern corners of the pyre, while one of them watches to see that the fire takes proper hold. It remains his duty to see that the fire burns

St Culshaw M-5 (1932-1943) 1949 AW42 Santal AW42

764 properly until the corpse has been thoroughly consumed. When it is over the onlookers begin to search among the embers for the *jaŭbaha*, literally the "bone-flower". I have never met a Santal who has been able to explain the meaning of the term. Three pieces of bone are collected, two from the skull and one piece of the collar bone. The turmeric paste and the sun-dried rice flour are mixed together and used to clean the bones; the small earthen pot in which the turmeric was carried is cleaned in the fire, and when it is dry the inside is again cleaned with some of the paste, after which the bones are put into it. The mouth of the pot is then stopped up with a fragment of earthenware and is sealed with some of the same paste; a small hole, however, is left in the centre of the lid "to enable the dead one to breathe". The remains of the fire are put out with great care. One of the men brings water from nearby, using the water pot brought from the house for this purpose; others sprinkle water and one man scatters the ashes with the winnowing fan. If the fire should rekindle it is thought to be a great misfortune. Men [787] would have to be collected to put it out once more and the bereaved family would be made to pay a fine to the rest of the village. When the fire is out the ashes are brought together in a small space and the rest of the site is cleaned with a plaster of cowdung and water. The parched rice is then sprinkled over the cleaned space, and this is known as "sowing" the rice, the same term being used as for the similar procedure during the marriage ceremony. Finally, the corpse bearers and the one who saw to the fire have to cross the ashes from south to north. The remaining ashes are covered over with the winnowing fan, and each of them in turn then leaps over with his left hand lightly resting on the fan as he does so. The party then leave the cremation ground and the pot containing the bones is buried at the base of a tree.

The members of the funeral party then bathe, after which they return to the end of the village street, where they light a small fire, using the straw from the roof of the house. They burn the cotton seeds together with some resin and oil cake, and holding their hands into the thick smoke they rub it all over themselves. On completing this operation they collect once more at the bereaved home to comfort the family and to drink [614] beer. On this occasion no one who belongs to the same clan as [273] the dead person and his family may partake of the beer.

765 The next phase in the ceremonies is known as *tel nahan*, or "oil washing", and alternatively it is spoken of as *umul ader*, or

St Culshaw M-5 (1932-1943) 1949 AW42 Santal AW42

797 The attitude of the community towards the family or the
798 individual who has become Christian is a complex of tolerance
621 and incomprehension. Becoming a Christian is not in itself an
626 offence for which there is an established penalty in tribal custom: the village council does not act and there is no formal outcasting of the offender from the community as there is, for example, when a Santal has married outside the tribe. The denial of tobacco and drinking water, two of the common manifestations of "separateness", are rarely used in the area, though sometimes found elsewhere. Thus, in the early days of the mission at Benagaria, Skrefsrud found that Christian converts were being cut off from social intercourse; by a process that sounds very like intimidation he invited all the leading Santals of the neighbourhood to a feast with the converts and informed them that having eaten with the converts they must now receive them back into the tribe.[1] Where social ostracism does occur it does not last long. There is rarely any need for a family to change their residence on becoming Christian so far as their fellow villagers are concerned, though some Christians do so because there are occasions when an isolated Christian family is put to grave inconvenience. This is particularly the case when a death occurs, for
• [764] the non-Christians will have nothing whatever to do with the disposal of a corpse after the strange manner of the Christians. Such predicaments occur only when the degree of isolation is great. With the individual convert it happens sometimes that he has to eat his meals separately from the rest of the family
[152] for a time. It is served to him out in the courtyard rather than on the verandah or in the house, but this signifies contempt rather than any other emotion and it does not last. Sometimes the members of the family show signs of genuine grief. There is no
[582] reason, from a Santal point of view, why non-Christian Santals should not marry Christians, although such marriages are not popular. The chief discouragement to them and the only discipline against them is exercised from the Christian side. And while relations between a convert and his kinsfolk and distant relatives do become strained, the old friendly relations are often resumed and it is customary for Christians to pay visits to the homes of non-Christian relations and *vice versa*. No attempt is made to dispossess or disinherit Christians who continue to enjoy the fruits of their toil in the fields.

797 This tolerance of Christians in the midst alongside the dis-
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[1] My authority for this statement is a small life of Skrefsrud in Santali, published by the Santal Mission of the Northern Churches.

794 The second main factor in producing tension is that the
177 Christian becomes a member of a community that is different
178 from the tribal community into which he was born and different
158 from any other within his experience. He may know of one or two Santals who have been influenced by the Bengal form of Vaishnavism and have adopted some strange customs in consequence, and he is familiar with the semi-secret society formed by the *ojha* and his disciples, but neither of these provides any analogy with the society of which he now becomes a member.
794 The preaching of the Christian Faith has been pioneered by
797 European missionaries, and up to the present the direction of the
177 affairs of the Christian Church has remained in the hands of
178 missionaries to a greater extent than in many other parts of
152 India. Their apparent superiority tends to make the village Christian belittle his own ideas and institutions. Their superior wealth and beneficence tempt him to rely on their help, and sometimes produce resentment when the help is withheld for a reason which he is quite unable to appreciate, the desire to make him "independent". Furthermore, Santal Christians are linked
794 through the Church with Christians who come from other com-
177 munities. This fusion of diverse elements produces strain at
178 times. There has been no difficulty from the first in taking common meals, and this has safeguarded the witness of the
[264] Sacrament of Holy Communion to the unity of believers in Christ. On the other hand, many Christians shrink from contact with the corpse of a non-Santal Christian. Near the village of Samadi there used to be one household of Christians who were of Bhuiya stock. I was on tour in the area when the
• [764] old grandmother died. She was buried in the Christian burial ground, here, as in most villages, a piece of waste-land within the holding of one of the Santal Christians, but none of the local Santal Christians would touch the corpse. The persistence of such ideas varies, one might say, in inverse proportion to the degree of contact which the local community enjoys with other Christians. Samadi is in a far corner of the area and such an incident would not occur nearer to the centre. This can be further illustrated by the fusion that has been
794 gradually taking place in the Christian community through
177 intermarriage. Although the village Christian abhors the thought
178 of intermarriage, a few individuals have ignored the rule of tribal endogamy and have contracted marriages against which there
582 are no Christian sanctions. Those who have done so would not find it possible to continue to live in the village community, and

St Culshaw M-S (1932-1943) 1949 AW42 Santal AW42

when they would sit and eat together. The feast took some time to prepare; the bride's relations—her parents were dead and she was married from the home of a paternal aunt, a blind widow—had provided a goat, but as they were in poor circumstances the Christian villagers had contributed the rice from their homes. While the guests waited for the food there was a good deal of singing, the songs being both traditional and Christian. Here are some examples noted at the time:

Two bows and six arrow shafts I kept in store.
The arrowheads have been sent ahead to *Radha*;[1]
The money also has been sent ahead to *Radha*.[2]

You who should have come yesterday at noon,
Why, sons, did you arrive in the evening?

Three headmen from three villages
Wrangled over the marriage booth;
They did not want to let go the vermilion giving.[3]

The daughter bids farewell and goes;
The house is forlorn, father, the house is forlorn,
The rice in the straw bundle has been pushed out;
Its wooden platform is forlorn, father, its wooden platform is forlorn.[4]

The following song struck a Christian note:

My life (Jesus) and your life,
Two lives (Jesus) are bound together;
Like the *alak* creeper and the *bando*[5] creeper,
Like the spider web in the palmyra tree,
Two lives (Jesus) are bound together.[6]

On this occasion I was unable to remain to witness the final farewell and homegoing, but these follow closely the traditional Santal way.

In the death ceremonies there is little trace of pre-Christian modes of thought. This is not surprising in view of the fact that Christian teaching not only gives a new significance to the individual but also has something definite to say about the destiny of the human soul after death. The difference is emphasized for

[1] The name of the bridegroom's village.
[2] See Appendix B, No. 32.
[3] Two forest creepers.
[4] See Appendix B, No. 31.
[5] See Appendix B, No. 33.
[6] See Appendix B, No. 34.

St Culshaw M-5 (1932-1943) 1949 AW42 Santal AW42
[Thd Santal Christian Community]

794 177 178 764

the Santal Christian by the fact that the Christian custom—so far as he is aware—is burial. When a death has occurred the interment follows as soon as possible, but not before the corpse has been anointed with oil and turmeric. For this service the Christians are dependent upon each other; non-Christians keep themselves strictly away from the house of death. The grave is always dug lengthwise from east to west and the head of the corpse is placed towards the west. Whenever possible the body is draped in a new cloth, but in any case the clothes worn at the time of death are also buried. Coffins are a sign of affluence; usually the body is laid on a bed of leaves at the bottom of the grave and covered gently with leaves and sticks before the earth is filled in. Small treasures are laid in the grave, personal possessions of the deceased; and it is not uncommon to bury a New Testament or a Bible with the body. The subsequent mourning and funeral ceremonies of the non-Christian are altogether absent; in their place we find that on the day after the funeral, which is also usually the day after the death has taken place, the Christians gather at the bereaved home, where they sing and pray together and hear the Scriptures read. The dead person is praised and the living are comforted; and no passages are more used at these occasions than the familiar words of the Twenty-third Psalm and the Fourteenth Chapter of the Gospel according to St. John. They share the Christian hope and in expressing it they are giving a new content to the word *ṛaṣka* that is so often on the lips of the Santal, for they speak of *jaejug ṛaṣka*, eternal joy.